


UNITED STATES ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY
WASHINGTON 1981OFFICE OF
THE DIRECTORCONFIDENTIAL

October 30, 1981

TO: The Secretary

FROM: ACDA - Eugene V. Rostow, Director 

SUBJECT: Draft Egyptian UN Resolution on Middle East
Nuclear Weapons Free Zone

Yesterday I reported to you that Walt Stoessel and I had agreed on compromise language dealing with a problem which had arisen in the course of Egyptian consultations with us at the UN about Egypt's draft Resolution on the Establishment of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone for the area. I said then that because of my agreement with Walt it would be unnecessary to bother you with the matter. Now the compromise has become unstuck.

Since I believe the issue raised defines a clear fork in the road for the MENWFZ-project and for the process of seeking peace in the Middle East more broadly, I believe you should be apprised of it.

The immediate problem is whether language that the US will suggest to Egypt for inclusion in its GA Resolution on a Middle East Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (MENWFZ) should include a preambular paragraph making it clear (in a cloudy way) that it is unrealistic to expect a MENWFZ to come into being unless and until the parties make peace. ACDA believes such language should be included. NEA believes it should be omitted. We have accepted three or four drafts of the paragraph, each one weaker than the other. We now stand on a version which Ambassador Fields, who has been conducting the talks with the Egyptians in New York, hopes the Egyptians can and will accept. At an earlier point, this text was also acceptable to IO and PM.

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GDS 10/30/87

State Dept. review completed

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We all agree that the preamble should include language indicating that Israel should adhere to NPT or the equivalent.

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Background

You will recall that you and I have discussed the MENWFZ project on several occasions, and agreed on its significance, both in itself and as a potential catalyst for getting the Arab States, other than Egypt, to comply with Security Council Resolution 338. On the basis of those talks, I have convened a number of meetings in the building; we have explored the issue in a tentative way with several governments and begun to prepare position papers on the basis of which our ultimate policy can be formulated and approved.

In that connection, it was agreed that the United States should continue to support and encourage the Egyptian initiative at the General Assembly this year, in the hope that the General Assembly would give it some additional impetus.

Since 1974 an annual resolution has been approved by the UNGA supporting the establishment of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in the Middle East. In recent years, Egypt has been the sponsor. The US has consistently supported this resolution. Last year the Israelis supported the resolution after having previously abstained. While supporting the resolution the Israelis made clear that any such MENWFZ could only be concluded through direct negotiations among the parties in the region. The Israelis have not, however, made their willingness to enter into negotiations on a MENWFZ conditional on resolution of outstanding political

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issues in the region, although they make it clear that they would not sign NPT until the Arabs comply with Resolution 338 and make peace.

Over the past week, we have been consulting in New York with the Egyptians on the draft resolution they are considering tabling this year. Their original draft was extremely bad -- it was really an Iraqi proposal. They have backed away from some of its worst features. They have not shown the draft to anyone else. Because of the close relationship between the peace process and the ability of States in the region to negotiate a NWFZ, we originally suggested language that made clear that any such NWFZ could not be concluded until a permanent peace was achieved. The Egyptians opposed that language indicating that it could imply that their efforts to make progress on a MENWFZ were futile in the absence of a permanent peace settlement. We then agreed on compromise language suggested by NEA, which was sent up to New York last Saturday. In the light of further talks with the Egyptians in New York, we now propose the following language for the cable, which is otherwise agreed:

"Considering that an agreement establishing a MENWFZ would be an important element in the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the area;"

This formulation is sufficiently murky to meet the needs of the Egyptians, but it does link peace and NPT together. It is consistent with the recognition by the UNGA that successful efforts to achieve a MENWFZ would enhance the possibility of achieving peace in the region. The Mission's latest reporting cable suggests that the Egyptians have no difficulty with language stating that a "MENWFZ can only become a reality after achievement of a permanent peace," but that they fear objections from more radical Arab states. They have indicated a willingness to consider some other formulation of the notion. The new language attempts to meet Egyptian concerns, while retaining this important concept in the draft cable. We believe at least one more determined effort to get the Egyptians to include the idea in the resolution should be attempted.

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